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no. 364 1941

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NOV 18 1941

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Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics

Extension Service Circular 364

July 1941

ADDRESS<sup>1/</sup>

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United States Department of Agriculture  
Washington, D. C.

Mr. Chairman, Delegates to this Conference, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I have the great honor to represent the Secretary of Agriculture of the United States of America, Honorable Claude R. Wickard, and the Federal Director of Extension Work, Dr. M. L. Wilson, at this conference. My associates and I represent, likewise, the State agricultural colleges of the States and Territories of my country and the Cooperative Extension Services in Agriculture and Home Economics of our Federal Department of Agriculture and these colleges. The Directors of Extension of the 10 States nearest the Mexican border are here in person to join me in this greeting.

I bring you greeting from our President, Franklin D. Roosevelt, so well known to all of us as the advocate of the Good Neighbor policy among the nations of the Western Hemisphere. I bring you greetings, likewise, from our Vice President, Henry A. Wallace, until recently our Federal Secretary of Agriculture. Vice President Wallace, as you know, is an ardent believer in friendly relations between our two great countries and recently was a visitor among you. In this connection, let me quote from a statement, On Continental Solidarity, from The Monterrey Greeter, the publication of the Mexican Automobile Association, which came to my attention only yesterday. I quote:

"Enthusiastically believing with Vice President Henry Agard Wallace that travel is the force in achieving true Pan-Americanism, every time we have the pleasure and opportunity to serve the American tourist public, we instinctively understand the value and possibilities of continental solidarity. This is because every returning visitor goes back home a better friend of Mexico and Latin America and, as such, becomes a booster for the cause of greater unity on our hemisphere."

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<sup>1/</sup> Presented at the joint conference of Federal and State agricultural officials of Mexico and the United States of America, held at Saltillo, Coahuila, Mexico, on April 2, 1941.



I am sure that every one of us in the United States delegation at this conference concurs heartily in this sentiment.

At the outset, may I tell you briefly of the educational organization that our group represents, the cooperative Extension Service of the Federal Department of Agriculture of the United States of America, and of the 51 State and Territorial colleges of agriculture.

Extension Work in agriculture and home economics is a cooperative system of education in which the United States Department of Agriculture cooperates with the State agricultural colleges, county appropriating bodies, and local groups of rural people in employing county and State extension agents to carry on extension work with rural men, women, boys, and girls, on their farms, in their homes, and in their communities.

Of the more than 9,000 technically trained men and women, located in 3,000 counties in the 48 States, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and Alaska, who make up the professional workers of the system, 7,400 are county extension agents. The work of the county agents is reinforced by a corps of 1,600 agricultural and home-economics specialists at the agricultural colleges. The technical extension staff is supplemented by the activity of more than 600,000 volunteer leaders -- farm men and women whose interest in improved farm living is so great that they donate a part of their time each year to spreading information among their neighbors. This network of trained agricultural and home-making leaders makes it possible to reach in an effective manner all the 6 million farm families of the United States.

These farm families, in turn, belong to home demonstration clubs for farm women, 4-H Clubs for farm boys and girls, and farmers' organizations for farmers and for farm families. The home demonstration clubs have over 1,100,000 farm women enrolled in their membership. The 4-H Clubs in agriculture and home economics have approximately 1,500,000 farm boys and girls actively engaged in their program and activities. The membership of the farm organizations runs into the hundreds of thousands and is devoted to the business, legislative, and social interests of the farm people of the United States.

Cooperative extension work is educational and plays no part in the regulatory, police, legislative, or business activities of agriculture and rural life, except to carry essential information and to encourage rural people to work out their programs with the help of competent local leadership. Through the extension system, the educational and research work of the State colleges of agriculture and the United States Department of Agriculture are taken to the rural people and adapted to their needs by the extension agents resident in the county and by the rural people themselves. The Extension Service is charged with the responsibility of getting local committees of farm people to study the problems of rural life and the best use of the land. These findings are used in the development of land use policies aimed at a Nation-wide improvement in

agriculture and rural life. The extension system assists in carrying national public programs affecting agriculture to local people, in interpreting these programs to them, and in encouraging rural people to take necessary action.

In conjunction with the Federal Extension Service and its educational activities carried on in cooperation with land-grant colleges in each State, we have a group of agencies originating within our Federal Department of Agriculture and conducting their work under its direction. These other agencies include the following:

(1) The Agricultural Adjustment Administration, which administers the adjustment and conservation programs. Active in the administration of these programs are 135,000 local farmer committeemen, elected from among their own number by producers cooperating in the national farm program and having charge of the program in all the rural counties of the United States.

The national AAA farm program has three main objectives: The maintenance of the Ever-Normal Granary by which producers and consumers are assured of abundant food supplies and emergency reserves of farm products at fair prices; conservation of soil resources; assistance to farmers in obtaining a fair share of the national income.

(2) The Federal Crop Insurance Corporation, which protects wheat farmers cooperating in the farm program against wheat-crop losses due to drought and other natural causes. AAA committeemen help the Crop Insurance Corporation to administer the program in the counties.

(3) The Surplus Marketing Administration, which has charge of the functions and responsibilities arising in connection with marketing-agreement and surplus-removal programs. The surplus-removal program includes the now famous Stamp Plan, under which eligible families in need of foods declared to be in surplus may purchase them at reduced cost through food stamps.

(4) The Farm Security Administration, which administers the farm-tenancy and rural-rehabilitation programs under which funds are advanced to eligible needy farm families and long-term loans are provided to help worthy farm tenants to become farm owners.

(5) The Farm Credit Administration, which provides United States farmers with a complete and coordinated credit system that can make available credit to farmers and stockmen and soundly operated cooperatives.

(6) The Bureau of Agricultural Economics, which cooperates with other agencies of the Department in developing farm programs that include land use, conservation, production adjustment, farm tenancy, rural rehabilitation, marketing service, and regulatory work.



The Bureau cooperates with farmers and technical experts in States and counties in developing land use planning programs.

(7) The Bureau of Animal Industry is primarily concerned with the protection and development of the livestock and meat industries of the United States. It conducts research and investigations of the causes, prevention, and treatment of diseases of domestic animals, investigates the existence of communicable diseases of such animals, and aids in their control and eradication. This agency also carries on investigations and experiments in animal husbandry, in the feeding and breeding of animals, and is also charged with the administration of some of the regulatory laws such as that governing meat inspection.

(8) The Soil Conservation Service, which cooperates with farmers in planning and applying erosion-control programs in soil conservation districts organized under State law. It conducts soil-conservation demonstration projects in cooperation with farmers in selected areas and develops practices that will contribute to the long-time conservation of soil and protection of land against wind and water erosion.

(9) The Forest Service which, in addition to the administration of 176,000,000 acres in national forests, is charged with improving forest practices on 425,000,000 acres of other forest land.

(10) The Rural Electrification Administration, which is a lending agency to promote the extension of electric power lines to serve farms and rural communities not now served by central-station electricity.

Other important Department of Agriculture agencies whose services are of considerable benefit to farmers are the Office of Land Use Coordination, Office of Experiment Stations, Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations, Bureau of Agricultural Chemistry and Engineering, Bureau of Home Economics, Agricultural Marketing Service, Commodity Credit Corporation, Commodity Exchange Administration, Bureau of Dairy Industry, Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine, and Bureau of Plant Industry.

As we in the United States study the needs and problems of our farm people, we endeavor to keep in mind certain objectives of our educational work:

First. - We encourage the farmer, farm woman, farm boy and girl, to do all he can as an individual to accomplish an improvement in his situation and in his methods of work. Here has been our emphasis since the beginnings of extension work, and we should by all means continue to encourage individual thinking, planning, and demonstration. It is the life of extension work, the hope of our farm people, of our Nation, and of the democratic process.

Second. - We encourage voluntary cooperation between farm neighbors, whether of the community or the county. We urge the greatest possible cooperation, initiative, and independent action on the part of local groups of farmers, farm women, and farm boys and girls. Second only to the stimulation of individual thought and self-reliance is the inculcation of a cooperative spirit and the ability to engage in cooperative effort.

Third. - We encourage farm people to cooperate with one another and with their State and Federal Governments on a State and National basis. This is the newer phase of extension work and one that presents a challenge as difficult to us as either of the foregoing. For our farmers, farm women, and farm boys and girls to understand and feel that something can and should be done in regard to State, National, and international situations now and in the future is imperative if progress is to be made in the improvement of farm living conditions and in our whole national economic and social structure.

Recently we had occasion to outline the field of our activities. I place before you this outline for your consideration and study:

#### Fields of Extension Activity

##### Health and medicine.

- (1) Nutrition in relation to health.
- (2) Housing in relation to health.
- (3) Community and home sanitation.
- (4) Water supply.
- (5) Safety in the home and on the farm.
- (6) Home nursing.
- (7) Sponsorship of free clinics for infants and preschool children (in cooperation with Public Health Service).
- (8) Promotion of medical and dental examinations.
- (9) Recreation and family relationships in relation to mental health.

##### Family security.

- (1) Study of dislocation and relocation of farm families living in areas appropriated for powder plants, testing fields, and other military purposes, in cooperation with the Farm Security Administration, Soil Conservation Service, and Bureau of Agricultural Economics.



(2) Land use or agricultural planning through assisting farm people and State, county, and community committeemen in surveys and studies of natural resources, soil conservation problems, profitable use of land, adjustment of crops, taxes, and credit, in cooperation with the following governmental agencies:

Agricultural Adjustment Administration.  
Bureau of Agricultural Economics.  
Soil Conservation Service.  
Farm Credit Administration.  
Farm Security Administration.  
Forest Service.  
Others.

(3) Farm-labor employment through assisting farmers to locate laborers by cooperating with the labor employment office.

(4) Consumer education in wise purchasing of food, clothing, and household equipment and furnishings.

(5) Cooperation with Surplus Marketing Administration and Agricultural Adjustment Administration in -

- (a) Cotton-mattress and comforter-making program.
- (b) Stamp Plan (for disposal of cotton goods).
- (c) School-lunch program.

#### Education.

(1) Organization of groups of rural young people and adults for discussions on such subjects as Democracy, Citizenship, and Agricultural and Educational Needs of Community and County.

(2) Cooperation with public schools.

(3) Special attention to needs and interests of rural young people.

#### Nutrition.

(1) Better living from the farm (food production for home use).

(a) Planning needed food supply.

(b) Production of food.

(c) Conservation of food through canning, storing, and freezer lockers.



(d) Wise purchasing of food.

(e) Marketing food surpluses.

(2) Nutrition for health and efficiency.

(a) General education of rural families regarding what is good nutrition.

(b) School lunch.

(c) Nutrition emphasized in 4-H Club work; food score card, planning and preparation of meals.

(d) Cooperation with Farm Security and W.P.A. in training their workers to spread nutrition information.

(3) Production of a sufficient supply of eggs, milk, and vegetables in areas where military camps have been established or enlarged. Land use, demand, standard of products, marketing, and credit are involved.

#### Recreation.

(1) Recreation is discovering, training, and using native abilities and is an aid in maintaining morale and mental health through -

(a) Camps for adults and 4-H Club boys and girls.

(b) Pageants and dramatics.

(c) Choruses, bands, orchestras.

(d) Crafts.

(e) Appreciation of music and other arts.

(f) Special leisure-time activities.

Let me impress upon you the vital importance of the welfare of our rural peoples to the welfare of our nations. I have not heard this thought better expressed anywhere than by the former State Director of Extension of our State of Louisiana, J. W. Bateman, in an eloquent address delivered by him in 1940 as President of the Association of Agricultural Workers of our Southern States:

"The wealth and security of this country rest not in skyscrapers and bridges of concrete and steel, nor in the gold reposing in the vaults of our banks, but in the millions of competent, satisfied, self-contained farm families; yes - educated, well clothed,

well fed, and healthy, dwelling in the little farm homes that dot the hills and valleys of our great land. The farmer and his family, as an independent, resourceful unit of self-reliant living, is the primary element of a rural society. Here rests the foundation of social and economic stability - the security of government.

"The hope for the future lies here."

How are we to bring about improvement in the situation and surroundings of our people? In a memorable address, delivered on January 15 last at Purdue University in La Fayette, Ind., our Federal Secretary of Agriculture, Claude R. Wickard, said:

"These problems of adjustment are the toughest for low-income producers who are in no way responsible for their development. All society has the moral obligation to help these people because it is in one way or another responsible for having helped increase the problems of low-income farm people. Also, from the hard-boiled dollars-and-cents point of view, it must be realized that letting these people go on a dole would be much more expensive than helping them make the necessary adjustments in farming. Likewise we must remember that one indispensable element in national preparedness is a well-fed, well-clothed, and well-housed rural people."

Further emphasizing the last sentence in Secretary Wickard's statement I read from a report made by the national headquarters of our Selective Service System for providing eligible men for service in our Army and Navy:

"Physical examination of Selective Service registrants by local board physicians prior to January 31, 1941, resulted in rejection of 32 percent as physically and mentally unfit for general military service. . . Of those passed by Selective Service physicians, approximately 12 percent had been rejected by Army induction boards. . . Rejections by local board physicians were divided into two categories -- those fit for limited military service but not fit for general military training and those unfit for any form of military duty. Twelve percent were in the former group and 20 percent in the latter."

The following table shows the principal cause for rejection by Selective Service and Army physicians to be defective teeth.



Ten Major Causes for Rejection by Selective Service and  
Army Physicians on the Basis of a Preliminary Survey<sup>1/</sup>

Cause	Percentage of total rejections	
	Selective Service	Army
1. Teeth. . . . .	17	22
2. Cardiovascular system. . . . .	13	7
3. Musculoskeletal defects. . . . .	10	4
4. Eyes . . . . .	9	13
5. Genitalia, including venereal. . . . .	6	5
6. Mental and nervous . . . . .	6	10
7. Ears, nose, and throat . . . . .	6	9
8. Hernia . . . . .	5	6
9. Feet . . . . .	4	6
10. Lungs. . . . .	3	4

<sup>1/</sup> Based on Selective Service System National Headquarters release No. 182, February 15, 1941.

Do we not as nations and as the people of our two nations, have a great obligation to accept and a great duty to perform in dedicating ourselves to realizing the objective set forth by Secretary Wickard, namely, to see to it that our peoples as a whole are "well fed, well clothed, and well housed," that they are physically equal to their obligations as wage earners, homemakers, and citizens, whether we are at peace or at war?

Nor should we overlook the mental development of our rural peoples. In the United States, in the past 10 years, we have put to the test on a tremendous scale mass application of the accumulated data of agricultural colleges and the Federal Department of Agriculture. This effort has called for rapid adjustments in thought and action. The success it attains must rest in the main on (1) the soundness of the program itself, and (2) the degree to which the program is understood, appreciated, and used by producers and by all the groups having to do with the production, marketing and consumption of agricultural products. This latter function is one in which extension workers have a great responsibility. Both now and in the future as the movement takes more permanent form and a more stabilized condition succeeds experimentation, our responsibility will be even greater.

Thought is the keyword of today -- the real stimulus of today's movement. Quickened thinking, broader thinking, more continuous thinking, thinking done by enough people and for a long-enough period to put us in control of economic forces and leave us no longer the unhappy victims of their unbridled development -- this is the great permanent value that we ought to get out of the present turmoil and uncertainty. We need, then, to stimulate thought, to stimulate

discussion, and to encourage concrete and practical action arising from such thought and discussion.

Our business now and in the future, as agricultural educators, is to get the true story and the whole story before as many people as possible and to get home to them the practical application of the story to their situation and their needs.

I have spoken of the encouragement of physical and mental development and stimulation of our rural peoples. There is need, too, for their spiritual development and stimulation. It was my high privilege to hear this thought expressed with wonderful clarity and emphasis by President Roosevelt in his Inaugural Address on January 20 last. It was, in fact, the keynote of his address. He said:

"It is not enough to clothe and feed the body of this Nation, and instruct and inform its mind. For there is also the spirit. And of the three, the greatest is the spirit.

"Without the body and the mind, as all men know, the Nation could not live.

"But if the spirit of America were killed, even though the Nation's body and mind, constricted in an alien world, lived on, the America we know would have perished.

"That spirit, that faith, speaks to us in our daily lives in ways often unnoticed, because they seem so obvious. It speaks to us here in the Capital of the Nation. It speaks to us through the processes of governing in the sovereignties of 48 States. It speaks to us in our counties, in our cities, in our towns, and in our villages. It speaks to us from the other nations of the hemisphere, and from those across the seas - the enslaved, as well as the free. Sometimes we fail to hear, or heed these voices of freedom because to us the privilege of our freedom is such an old old story...."

So, as I come to the close of this imperfect discussion, I can but hope that our meeting today may be, indeed, the forerunner of many and frequent meetings and conferences between representatives of our rural people as well as between representatives of our professional workers in agriculture and home economics. We have so much in common, so much that we can give each other, so much that we can receive from others that I fervently hope today's meeting may prove to be the prelude of lasting and mutually helpful relations and discussions between us.

I would leave with you the thought of another great American and international figure, President Woodrow Wilson. He said in 1910, while head of Princeton University:



"The great voice of America does not come from the seats of learning. It comes in a murmur from the hills and woods and factories and the mills, rolling and gaining volume until it comes to us from the homes of the common men. Do these murmurs echo in the corridors of the universities? I have not heard them. The universities would make men forget their common origins, forget their universal sympathies, and join a class -- and no class can ever serve America. I have dedicated every power there is in me to bring the colleges that I have anything to do with to an absolutely democratic regeneration in spirit, and I shall not be satisfied until America shall know that the men in the colleges are saturated with the same thought and the same sympathies as the common people."

On behalf of the rural peoples of our two great nations, I call on you who are the educators of the rural people of Mexico to make common cause with us in dedicating our schools, our agencies, and our every effort to this great end.

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DISTRIBUTION. - A copy of this circular has been sent to each extension worker, and to each agricultural-college library and experiment-station library.

